

Remarks

Claims 4 to 6 are amended and claim 7 is added. Claims 4 to 7 are pending in this application of which claims 4 and 7 are in independent form.

Claims 4 to 6 were rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for the reasons set forth on pages 2 to 5 of the action.

In claim 4, it was unclear if "including the nitrogen oxide concentration in exhaust gases" is meant to be a part of the claimed method or if this just represents the preferred oxidizing gas to be determined. It is the preferred oxidizing gas to be determined and claim 4 is amended to recite that the method is for determining the concentration of oxidizing gases in gas mixtures and especially for determining the nitrogen oxide concentration in exhaust gases of an internal combustion engine.

On page 2, paragraph 4, of the action, the various terms in parentheses were objected to. The terms in parentheses have been included to facilitate reference to the applicants' disclosure and should be permitted in view of MPEP 608.01(m). As noted here, the use of reference characters is to be considered as having no effect on the scope of the claims.

On page 2, paragraph 6, claim 4 was objected to because it was unclear which electrodes applicants were referring to in the phrase "applying a voltage to the electrodes". Claim 4 is amended to recite that the voltages are applied to the pump electrodes, respectively, and thereby generate respective pump currents.

Thus, the claims now are coextensive with the applicants' disclosure which clearly shows that a different voltage is applied to each of the pump electrodes.

On page 3, paragraph 7, of the action, claim 4 was objected to because the phrase "evaluating a pump current as a measurement signal" was confusing. Claim 4 is amended to now recite the method step of:

"measuring one of said pump currents
and outputting said one pump current as a
measurement signal;"

Accordingly, the applicants have now specified a particular pump current which is outputted as a measurement signal.

On page 3, paragraph 8, of the action, the Examiner recommends that the applicants amend claim 4 to specify that the voltage is being changed by dependent factors that represent the characteristic resistances (or conductances) of the feed line and/or between the electrodes. Claim 4 is amended to recite that the voltages are changed in dependence upon these factors. Thus, claim 4 now includes the method step of:

"changing said voltages (U_IPE; U_O2;
U_NO), which are applied to the pump
electrodes, in dependence upon factors
which correspond to the characteristic
resistances or conductances between said
electrodes during operation of the sensor
in such a manner that the voltages
correspond to predetermined desired values
in the interior of said sensor."

Thus, claim 4 now recites that the voltages applied to the pump electrodes are changed in a clear and precise manner.

The confusion noted on page 4, paragraphs 9 and 10, is believed to be resolved by the amended last clause of claim 4.

On page 4, paragraph 11, the phrase "in the interior of said sensor" was unclear. It is noted that the voltages which are applied to the electrodes in the interior of the sensor are to be distinguished from the voltages which are present at the connecting pads of the sensor.

On page 4, paragraph 12, claim 5 was objected to because the use of the phrase "wherein voltages are added to the voltage applied to the electrodes" was indefinite. Also, the term "added" was unclear.

Claim 5 is amended to recite that the addition of the voltages defines an embodiment of change of voltage set forth in claim 4. While claim 4 recites only the changing of the voltages, claim 5 explains that the changing can take place by the addition of voltages in the manner set forth in this claim.

On page 5, paragraph 13, the term "currents" is referred to. This term is deleted from claim 5 with the amendment thereof.

On page 5, paragraph 14, of the action, claim 5 was also objected to because that the "added" or "changing" can also be a function of sliding mean values of the voltages in addition to other potential factors. In view of this objection, the above phrase has been deleted from claim 5 and a new independent claim 7 is added and sets forth the alternative which is deleted from claim 5.

Claim 6 was objected to because this claim does not specify where the oscillation occurs. Claim 6 is amended to recite that the oscillation is of the sensor so that claim 6 should now also be definite.

In view of the foregoing, applicants respectfully submit

that claims 4 to 6 and added claim 7 should now be definite as required by the statute.

The claims were not otherwise rejected so that the application should now be in condition for allowance.

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Walter Ottesen".

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